

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 2-5 and 14-17 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Please amend Claims 7, 11, 18, 23, and 25 as follows.

1. (Previously Presented) A speech signal processing apparatus comprising:
distortion obtaining means for obtaining a modification distortion between
synthesis units before and after modification;
selection means for selecting synthesis units based on the modification
distortion obtained by said distortion obtaining means; and
speech synthesis means for performing speech synthesis based on the synthesis
units selected by said selection means.

2-5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said
distortion obtaining means uses a value obtained by adding the modification distortion between
the synthesis units before and after modification and a concatenation distortion generated by
concatenating a synthesis unit to another synthesis unit.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim 5~~ Claim 1, wherein
said distortion obtaining means calculates a weighted sum of the modification distortion between

the synthesis units before and after modification and the a concatenation distortion generated by concatenating a synthesis unit to another synthesis unit.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said distortion obtaining means calculates the modification distortion using a cepstrum distance.

10. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said distortion obtaining means includes a table storing distortions, and determines the modification distortion by referring to the table.

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim 5~~ Claim 1, wherein said distortion obtaining means includes a table storing concatenation distortions, and determines the a concatenation distortion by referring to the table.

12. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising:

input means for inputting text data;

language analysis means for performing language analysis of the text data; and

prosody-parameter generation means for generating predetermined prosody parameters based on a result of analysis of said language analysis means,

wherein said distortion obtaining means obtains the modification distortion between the synthesis units before and after modification based on the predetermined prosody parameters generated by said prosody-parameter generation means.

13. (Previously Presented) A speech signal processing method comprising:
a distortion obtaining step of obtaining a modification distortion between synthesis units before and after modification;
a selection step of selecting synthesis units based on the modification distortion obtained in said distortion obtaining step; and
a speech synthesis step of performing speech synthesis based on the synthesis units selected in said selection step.

14-17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a value is obtained by adding the modification distortion between the synthesis units before and after modification and a concatenation distortion generated by concatenating a synthesis unit to another synthesis unit.

19. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a weighted sum is calculated of the modification distortion between the

synthesis units before and after modification and a concatenation distortion generated by concatenating a synthesis unit to another synthesis unit.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, the modification distortion is calculated using a cepstrum distance.

22. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a table storing distortions is provided, and the modification distortion is determined by referring to the table.

23. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~Claim 17~~ Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a table storing concatenation distortions is provided, and the a concatenation distortion is determined by referring to the table.

24. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 13, further comprising:

an input step of inputting text data;

a language analysis step of performing language analysis of the text data; and

a prosody-parameter generation step of generating predetermined prosody parameters based on a result of analysis in said language analysis step,

wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a modification distortion is obtained between the synthesis units before and after modification based on the predetermined prosody parameters generated in said prosody-parameter generation step.

25. (Currently Amended) A storage medium, capable of being read by a computer, storing a program for executing a method according to any one of Claims ~~13 through~~ 13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, and 24.